

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Original) A process for producing an aliphatic polyester with a reduced content of residual cyclic ester, comprising: producing an aliphatic polyester by ring-opening polymerization of a cyclic ester, wherein a latter period of polymerization is proceeded with by way of solid-phase polymerization, and the resultant aliphatic polyester is subjected to removal of residual cyclic ester by release to a gas phase.
2. (Original) A production process according to claim 1, wherein solid-phase polymerization is performed at a temperature of below 195 °C.
3. (Currently amended) A production process according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein the cyclic ester is glycolide or a mixture of glycolide and lactide.
4. (Currently amended) A production process according to ~~any of Claims 1-3~~ claim 1, wherein in the removal of residual cyclic ester, the aliphatic polyester resultant after the polymerization in a particle form is caused to contact a heated dry gas, thereby entraining the residual cyclic ester with the gas and removing the residual cyclic ester from the aliphatic polyester.
5. (Original) A production process according to claim 4, wherein the heated dry gas is at a temperature of 120 - 225 °C.
6. (Currently amended) A production process according to ~~any of claims 1-3~~ claim 1, wherein in the removal of residual cyclic ester, the aliphatic polyester resultant after the polymerization in a particle form is placed under an action of a reduced pressure, thereby liberating the residual cyclic ester into a gas phase of the reduced pressure and removing the residual cyclic ester from the aliphatic polyester.

7. (Currently amended) A production process according to ~~any of claim 1-6~~ claim 1, wherein the aliphatic polyester resultant after the polymerization is pelletized together with a thermal stabilizer and then the pelletized aliphatic polyester is subjected to the removal of residual cyclic ester.

8. (Currently amended) A production process according to ~~any of claim 4-7~~ claim 4, wherein the aliphatic polyester subjected to the removal of residual cyclic ester is in a form of particles having a diameter of at most 8 mm.

9. (Currently amended) An aliphatic polyester obtained through a process according to ~~any of claims 1-8~~ claim 1, having a residual cyclic ester content of less than 0.2 wt. %